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ABSTRACT

This book describes an ethnographic study of cultural routines involved in enculturating children into Kpelle society in West Africa. The study focused on: (1) playforms such as pretend play; and (2) adult-guided activities such as apprenticeship. Chapter 1 of the book, "Studying Child Development in Kpelle Society," introduces the general approach to the study. Chapter 2, "Cultural Routines for Children's Development," describes a theory of child development incorporating cultural routine and "culture as information" as core concepts. Chapter 3, "The Research Setting," describes earlier research with the Kpelle of Liberia, the principal research site, and Kpelle cultures. Chapter 4, "Kpelle Work," presents an emic characterization of work, focusing on the social machinery in rice cultivation. Chapter 5, "Parents, Children, and Make-Believe," examines stories that parents and young children tell about each other, how children participate in household activities, parents' expectations for children, and the open spaces in the village where children engage in pretend play and observe adults. Chapter 6, "Games and Models," describes experiments to identify cognitive skills transmitted in playing games. Chapter 7, "Dances, Songs, Stories, Proverbs, and the Acquisition of Values," discusses transmitting character through morally loaded texts. Chapter 8, "Children's Work," focuses on children's work which provides a direct way to learn adult responsibilities and acquire adult competencies. Chapter 9, "Apprenticeship and Bush School as Formal Education," discusses learning various skills and the initiation process. Chapter 10, "The Kwii Way," addresses social change, Kpelle adaptation to formal education, and purposes of enculturation. Contains approximately 250 references. (KB)

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